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Not Working

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Not Working / Debora Greger

Father trained us to get up at seven o'clock. Now
Irina wakes at seven and lies in bed at least till
nine thinking. And she looks so serious!

Olga, in *Three Sisters*

In bed at noon, thinking hard
about the pure life of meaning
and the easy sleep of workmen,

how sound it must be,
I am stopped by a whistling.
Could the wolf be at my door?

Or trampling the flowers
under my window? No, it is
much more familiar, the voice that calls,

"Irina, lazy one, put on your white dress.
This afternoon is no more beautiful
than any other and I'm getting older."

His face above the perennial
bouquet blushes, matching the petals.
Feeling the weight of the future,

like an ox sunk in a muddy field,
I am slow to rise. Yesterday
the man at my window took

a common warbler for a wild canary.
That much I suspect. Do I want to spend
days in the shade, nights under false sun?

Is being watched a kind of love?
Once I saw a field so dry
it burst into flame. But that

is another story.